



Media Release

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NEW ASSISTIVE DEVICE TO ENCOURAGE LOW-VISION COMMUNITY TO READ MORE

Result of Successful Nanyang Polytechnic-InSiPhil Collaboration

Singapore: Reading newspapers, magazines and novels – something taken for granted – is a daily struggle for those with low-vision. To help this community read better and encourage them to read more, Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) has successfully collaborated with InSiPhil (S) Pte Ltd to produce a new assistive device named Vertex. One of the first local beneficiaries is the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH).

Vertex: Reading Made Easy for the Low Vision

Vertex is a desktop CCTV with a 17" flat panel display. It is portable and uses batteries or a 19v adapter.

Vertex is easy to use. All a low-vision person needs to do is place the reading material onto a screen. The text can be magnified from 3.5 to 48 times. There is also a range of multiple viewing options, including 24 different colour combinations, and a 'negative text' viewing mode (bright white letters on a low-glare background).

Design-wise, the Vertex sports a sleek, modern look. It uses size adjustment levers, instead of traditional knobs found in similar machines, so that the elderly can use it with ease.

The product resulted from nine months of work between NYP's Biomedical Engineering staff and students, and InSiPhil. NYP staff created the mechanical design, electronic hardware and configuration of the Vertex.

Mr Ng Soon Seng, Managing Director of InSiPhil (S) Pte Ltd, explained why he decided to team up with NYP for this project. "NYP has been well known for its strength in engineering," said Mr Ng. "In addition, employing NYP's helped reduce the development time. By engaging NYP to provide the industrial and mechanical design, and the prototype, we were able to cut the development period by 50%. Instead of spending 18 months from concept stage to a working prototype, NYP produced a working prototype within 9 months. Timing is critical in business."

He found staff from NYP's School of Engineering "eager and enthusiastic" and added: "NYP has it all – in terms of knowledge, resources, and design expertise. The industrial design created for Vertex was prompt, with original and innovative ideas. The mechanical aspects of the design are practical and economical to manufacture. It was a product delivered on time, meeting all deadlines."

The Vertex has been exhibited in Europe and USA since March 2007. The response has been good. A total of 150 units were sold since mass production in September 2007.

Opening Up New Horizons for the Low Vision

The Vertex machine is among a number of telesensory products InsiPhil has donated to SAVH. The machine has been a blessing to SAVH's clients as it has helped both the young and the elderly gain access to more reading materials, boosting their confidence with improved reading skills.

Said Mr Edmund Wan, Executive Director of SAVH, "Technology has revolutionized our daily life especially for people who are blind or vision impaired. Reading was very difficult and taken for granted by many. Until only recently, the world of print information—newspapers, books, signs, and menus—was literally closed off to people with little or no sight. The use of hand-held magnifying glass was limited in

scope. The Vertex portable CCTV has now brought the solution to this problem within reach of those who are unable to see. Such a device has helped those with low vision in their education needs. Thanks to the advances in technology, they now can continue to pursue a tremendous range of knowledge like anyone in the mainstream of society.”

For more information, please contact:

Sandra Tan
Manager/Corporate
Communications
Nanyang Polytechnic
Tel: 6550 0223
HP: 9479 1033
E-mail: sandra_tan@nyp.gov.sg

Liang Hwee Ming
Assistant Manager/Corporate
Communications
Nanyang Polytechnic
Tel: 6550 0224
HP: 97390287
Email: liang_hwee_ming@nyp.gov.sg